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ADOPTION OF THE REPORT

Draft proceedings of the Governing Council at its sixteenth session

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Addendum

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORTS (continued)

1. In the general discussion on agenda item 4, many representatives spoke of the importance their Governments attached to environmental matters at the national level and gave a description of measures being taken or proposed in their countries to protect and enhance the environment and to achieve sustainable development. Many also gave an account of their Governments' involvement in bilateral, subregional, regional and international co-operation on environmental matters.

United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED)

2. Numerous representatives spoke of the importance of the 1992 United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED). One voiced the opinion that, as UNCED was taking place after the Cold War, it could devote itself fully to environment and development issues. Another expressed the view that the Conference would formulate the basis of a new world order.

3. Many representatives urged UNEP to continue contributing to the preparations for the Conference. One stated that those preparations should include the subjects of transfer of and access to environmentally sound technology, the development of endogenous technology and new and additional resources to support sustainable development. Another suggested that the critical subject of environmental information be included in the UNCED agenda.

4. A number of representatives claimed that UNEP should be strengthened with a view to UNCED and beyond, and several stated the belief that UNCED could only strengthen UNEP further. Many observed that the Conference would recommend the restructuring of the entire United Nations system, UNEP included, in respect of environmental issues and that it was therefore premature to take any decisions concerning UNEP's structure or mandate.

5. A number of representatives expressed the hope that the conventions on climate change and biological diversity would be ready for signature at the Conference. One stated that his Government would oppose any convention on climate change that did not contain concrete commitments for the control of carbon dioxide emissions, as well as resources for the transfer of technology. Echoing this view, another representative insisted upon a climate change framework convention that "had teeth". Several others urged UNEP to concentrate its resources on developing the biological diversity convention as rapidly as possible. However, some stated that, if time constraints adversely affected its quality, they preferred to await a balanced legal text after UNCED.

Strengthening of UNEP

6. There was a general consensus that UNEP needed strengthening to tackle the work on which it was already engaged and the tasks likely to be entrusted to it in the future. However, many representatives while agreeing that some strengthening of UNEP was needed, considered that decisions on most of the Executive Director's proposals to that end should be postponed until after the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development had been held in 1992, though one representative said that the imminence of the Conference should not prevent the Governing Council from carrying out its duties. Another representative said that it would be helpful if the secretariat could prepare a comprehensive paper on the future role of UNEP, and the structural changes required, for submission to the Conference.

Independent external evaluation

7. A number of representatives said that, in order to assess UNEP's management and organization, its weak points and its strong points, an independent external evaluation by an outside management consultant should be undertaken and one representative said that such an evaluation should focus more particularly on communications.

Special Session of the Governing Council

8. Concerning the Executive Director's proposal to hold a special session of the Governing Council early in 1992 before the last session of the UNCED Preparatory Committee, a number of representatives said it was important to hold such a session, as it would give the Council an opportunity to consolidate its views and make recommendations to UNCED, and to study and evaluate various reports for submission to the Conference. One representative supporting the proposed special session prior to UNCED, said there should also be another special session afterwards to consider the outcome of the Conference.

9. A number of representatives said there was insufficient reason to warrant holding a special session in 1992.

10. Several representatives said it might be preferable to hold a special session after UNCED, but before the forty-seventh session of the General Assembly, to enable the Council to report on how UNEP could respond to UNCED.

11. Referring to the three reports that were to be submitted to the Governing Council at the proposed special session, one representative said that they did not appear to warrant the costs of a session; the resources could be better used for substantive contributions. Another representative considered that the reports should have been submitted to the Council at its current session. Several representatives suggested that the reports be

considered by the Committee of Permanent Representatives and passed, with that Committee's comments, to the UNCED Preparatory Committee.

Membership of the Governing Council

12. Concerning the Executive Director's proposal for an increase in the membership of the Governing Council, several representatives expressed the opinion that there was no need to expand the membership. One of those representatives said that an increase would complicate, rather than improve, the Council's functioning on the threshold of UNCED, which was to decide on the whole system of international environmental co-operation. Some other representatives thought that the proposal required thorough discussion and assessment, which, one of them said, should be based on the availability of financial resources and the physical arrangements.

13. Some representatives said that it was essential to allow greater participation by Governments through an increase in the membership of the Governing Council. Others suggested that the Governing Council should embrace all States Members of the United Nations.

14. In the opinion of one representative, the time was not ripe to increase the size of the Governing Council especially if that were to lead to the creation of an Executive Committee whose mandate could be difficult to regulate.

Annual sessions of the Governing Council

15. A number of representatives supported the Executive Director's proposal regarding the organization of annual sessions of the Governing Council. One of those representatives said that the two-year budget cycle should remain, in the way outlined by the Executive Director. One representative, supporting the increased frequency of Council sessions, considered it a good idea to have discussions focus on specific priority subjects, as proposed by the Executive Director. He went on to say that the dialogue between the Executive Director and the Committee of Permanent Representatives should also be intensified between sessions. One representative said that, given the gravity of the global environmental problems, policy guidance was needed every year and deserved serious attention.

16. One representative, while agreeing that the status of the Governing Council should be enhanced, doubted whether that pointed to increased membership or additional sessions. A more effective solution, he continued, might be to have a smaller Executive Committee, meeting between sessions. Another representative said he preferred the current system of biennial meetings, with special sessions as and when necessary.

17. Several representatives supported the idea of organizing the future work of the Council in two standing committees, which, as one of them said, were a good way of examining routine and administrative matters. The observer for IUCN expressed support for the way in which the current session had been organized, especially in light of the number of decisions to be considered by the Council. A number of representatives considered that the procedure, as applied at the present sixteenth session of the Council, should be evaluated.

18. One representative said that the experience of the current session was not conclusive; it was not possible to separate completely what came under programme and what came under budget. In his view, a thematic approach was preferable, preceded by a brief budget session to set out the available funding package. Another said that the establishment of Executive and

standing Committees for programme matters and the Environment Fund had financial implications that would not help the implementation of programme. Yet another representative considered that the proposal on standing committees needed further study.

Executive Committee

19. One representative said he was in favour of the establishment of an Executive Committee of the Governing Council with 30 members, while another considered that the proposal deserved further clarification and study.

20. Some representatives opposed the idea of establishing an Executive Committee. One of them feared such a Committee would diminish the Council's principal role and involve additional financial burdens, without significantly increasing the efficiency of UNEP's activities. Moreover, it would run counter to the practice of other international non-specialized organizations.

Plenary meetings of the Council on topics of regional concern

21. Some representatives supported the Executive Director's proposal to set aside two plenary meetings of the Council to discuss selected topics of regional concern.

22. Some representatives expressed the view that it would be preferable to strengthen the Committee of Permanent Representatives. One of them considered that it should be given a decision-making function between sessions but that a decision on the matter should await the outcome of UNCED.

23. One representative had reservations regarding the idea of increasing the functions of the Committee of Permanent Representatives, which, was lacking in equitable geographical distribution, governed as it was by the presence or otherwise of a permanent mission in Nairobi.

Joint Bureaux Meetings

24. One representative said that, in view of the reported success of the joint bureaux meetings, he wholeheartedly endorsed their continuation. Another supported the institutionalization of such meetings. Some representatives stated that such meetings might not be sufficient to provide the required co-ordination and that other arrangements should also be explored, while another representative was doubtful of the value of holding meetings between the Bureau and the bureaux of other organizations.

UNEP's headquarters site

25. There was a general consensus that UNEP's headquarters should remain in Nairobi and several representatives stressed that none of the UNEP Units which were already located there should be moved away. One representative said that a move away from Nairobi would entail a waste of resources.

26. The representative of the host country said that communications for UNEP headquarters were being upgraded with the installation of new, computer-based satellites, one of which would be operational by the end of May. In addition, as a top priority, an ultra-modern communications exchange was being installed at Gigiri to increase the number of circuit lines between UNEP and the central exchange, in order to cope with future demands. Several representatives welcomed the news of the efforts to upgrade the communications facilities for UNEP's headquarters.

An Environment fund target of $US 250 million

27. A number of representatives expressed the view that, while UNEP should aspire to a higher Fund target for the future, the goal of $250 million was somewhat too ambitious, one of them adding that it would be more prudent to plan work programmes based on a lower figure. Another representative foresaw a shortfall in meeting even the 1992 target of $100 million. Yet another expressed the view that recent events in the Gulf region had demonstrated that the "peace dividend" was an illusion;

28. One representative stated that, while an increase in contributions was necessary, there was also a clear need to increase the number of contributors so as to achieve a more equitable sharing of the burden. That view was echoed by another representative who asked the Executive Director to provide a yardstick other than the United Nations scale of assessments for comparing the contributions of the various countries. Endorsing the conclusions of the Fund Committee, another representative urged the Executive Director to seek the guidance of the Committee of Permanent Representatives in setting Fund targets. Yet another stated that increases in the Fund targets should be gradual.

29. By contrast, several representatives fully supported the $250 million target. Indeed, one of them held that any target lower than $250 million would imply that UNEP was unable to discharge its responsibilities.

Environment and economics

30. Numerous representatives stressed the vicious circle of poverty, economic underdevelopment and environmental degradation. One in particular echoed the Executive Director's call to replace the traditional system of calculating GNP by a system of natural resource accounting at both the national and international levels adding that, unless the real cost of resource use was measured and the consequences of inaction taken into account, it would be difficult to change the behaviour of Governments and people. Further, he stated that an effective strategy for tackling the problems of poverty, development and environment simultaneously should focus initially on people's well-being as well as resources and production, promoting sustainable livelihood and access to it.

31. One representative asked why UNEP had not dealt with the linkage between environment and economics earlier. He also requested the results of the UNEP eco-development projects of the 1970s, on which considerable sums had been spent, adding that UNEP had made no specific recommendations to developing countries after the conclusion of those projects as to how their Governments might incorporate environmental considerations into the development decision-making process. Moreover, he asked what would be needed to make market economics, which were increasingly being imposed upon the world, less environmentally destructive. Another representative maintained that industry, notably transnational corporations, which he characterized as the leaders of international development, must participate with Governments and intergovernmental bodies to protect the environment.

32. The observer for the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) informed the Council that sustainable development concerns had been integrated into its work, notably in the areas of commodities, technology, and finance for development. He added that the Secretary-General of UNCTAD had recently proposed the establishment of a system of tradeable permits for carbon dioxide emissions.

33. The Chairman of the Business Council for Sustainable Development, stated that both individually and collectively, Governments had been unwilling or unable to provide market or regulatory signals that would provide an economic rationale for the enhanced protection of common ecosystems. Business wished to contribute substantially to sustainable development, which would require an economic system able to generate surpluses and technical knowledge on a self-reliant and sustained base; a production system that respected the obligation to preserve the economic base for development; a technological system that could search continuously for new solutions; and an international system that fostered sustainable patterns of trade and finance.

The Global Environmental Facility

34. Many representatives hailed the establishment of the Global Environmental Facility and a number announced their contributions to the new mechanism. One praised its establishment as the most exciting environmental development since the Council's agreement on CFCs; another remarked that, in 1972, it would have been unthinkable for the World Bank to set up a fund to finance the resolution of global environmental problems.

35. Some representatives stated that a clear case for strengthening UNEP lay in the Facility, which could become an important forum for environmental assistance to developing countries; UNEP would ensure that the projects funded by the Facility had the environmental value. One added that such projects could be harmonized with other efforts in international environmental co-operation, especially of legal instruments that were being prepared or that had entered into force. By contrast, another representative, while expressing his appreciation of the creation of the Facility, urged the establishment of innovative funding mechanisms under their respective conventions. Yet another stated that the Facility had the potential of providing an administrative and financing model for conventions and protocols currently being negotiated. Some kind of centrally managed fund was highly preferable to the proliferation of funds, he added, though a central fund would be politically viable only if it made provision for Contracting Parties to participate in decision-making on policy and guidelines for financing activities. In that connection, one representative requested information about the relationship between the Interim Multilateral Fund for the Montreal Protocol and the way in which the Facility's Scientific and Technical Advisory Panel would function.

36. The observer for UNDP stated that the association of UNEP, the World Bank and his own organization in the Global Environmental Facility had been most fruitful in promoting a closer relationship among all three on environmental matters. The Scientific and Technical Advisory Panel appointed by Dr. Tolba would significantly influence UNDP thinking on subjects dealt with by the Facility, 12 projects of which, valued at more than $70 million, had been assigned to UNDP.

The Global Environment Technology Centre

37. Technology transfer to developing countries, several representatives said, played a key role in both development and conservation of the environment. Referring to the establishment of a Global Environmental Technology Centre, which her Government had proposed to the Governing Council at its second special session, the representative of Japan said she had held intensive discussions with UNEP to work out the details. The Centre would be an integral part of UNEP, and would not represent any duplication of the efforts of other entities.

38. One representative considered that useful progress had been made on consideration of the Centre in the Council, but still wished to be assured on some details of its structure and relationship to other parts of UNEP. Another representative said that, if the preparatory process for the Centre was on the right track, there would be no duplication of efforts. Provided the Centre was clearly an independent UNEP Centre, said another representative, his Government was prepared to support it. One other delegation saw merit in such a centre as a forum of transfer of technology.

39. Another representative considered the idea of a UNEP centre on safe technology to be very useful. Yet another representative, while welcoming any activities to undertake the transfer of environmentally sound technology, said that he shared the concern that the Centre might be a duplication of an existing institution. One other representative strongly endorsed the establishment of the Centre, pointing out that, under its mandate, there must be no duplication of activities with those of UNEP's IEO.

40. One representative welcomed the establishment of self-financed centres of technology transfer and education, networking with existing UNEP offices.

41. Another favoured the development of an international network for non-polluting technologies, based on strengthening UNEP's IEO as a PAC, and supported by the expertise of national and regional centres, in order to transfer technologies.

42. The observer for Unesco expressed the view that it was first important to strengthen the scientific capabilities of developing countries, since without such a build-up the transfer of technology could not work.

Centre for urgent environmental assistance

43. Many representatives supported the proposal that a centre for urgent environmental assistance be developed, stating that such a centre could begin functioning on an experimental basis before the Conference was held. One representative urged caution lest there should be duplication of work. Another representative suggested that a small working group should be set up to examine the modalities of establishing the centre. The working group would then report to the Conference.

44. Some representatives who supported the establishment of the centre, suggested that it should develop an international register of experts for environmental emergencies and, possibly, a register of ecologically hazardous facilities. Another supported the idea of developing a register of environmental experts, while yet another thought that a treaty of mutual assistance in cases of environmental emergencies, on the lines of the 1986 Vienna Conventions, would be more appropriate than a centre.

World Environment Academy

45. A number of representatives expressed support for the proposal that a World Environment Academy be established, and one emphasized that it should be located at UNEP headquarters. One representative said that the proposed Academy could be accommodated on the premises of a similar institution that already existed in his country. Another thought that such an Academy, if needed, should be the responsibility of an organization other than UNEP, possibly one outside the United Nations system, while some others urged caution so as to avoid duplication of work.

Green Brigade

46. Many representatives expressed their support for the proposed establishment of a corps of volunteers for the environment, to be known as the "Green Brigade", which, they thought, would give a new impetus to environmental activities in many countries. Several representatives felt, however, that a less military title might be more attractive. One representative thought that it might be better to interest the United Nations Volunteers more in green issues.

47. A few representatives thought that the proposal would need to be reformulated to make it clear that the function of the body would be one of networking and support and not the provision of a volunteer service, while another said that such "brigades" might be effective at a purely national level. The observer for the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) said that a number of non-governmental organizations were concerned lest the proposed Green Brigade encroached upon their activities and support. In the event that the proposal was to be reformulated, he hoped that the relevant NGOs would be consulted first.

Strengthening international environmental law

48. A number of representatives thought that UNEP should play a more active part in strengthening international environmental law, including legal aspects of environmental disputes. One representative considered that UNEP had many more urgent tasks to perform than to act as a mediator or arbitrator in environmental disputes.

49. Some representatives had no objection to UNEP playing a mediatory role, provided it acted at the request of all the Governments concerned and within clearly defined terms of reference. Some other representatives urged caution and suggested that the question be left to the 1992 Conference. One representative suggested that the role of UNEP in environment should be limited to the provision of information to help reconciliation and crisis avoidance, mediation being reserved for regional or subregional organizations.

Verification of the implementation of treaties

50. A number of representatives stressed the importance of monitoring states' fulfilment of their obligations under the treaties that UNEP had helped to develop. One representative proposed regular meeting of the heads of treaty secretariats for that purpose. Another stated that the issue could best be considered by Working Group III of the UNCED Preparatory Committee.

The environmental situation arising from the conflict between Iraq and Kuwait

51. A number of representatives praised UNEP's initiatives in investigating the environmental impact of the hostilities arising from the conflict between Iraq and Kuwait, one adding that that particular ecological emergency had demonstrated that Governments and multilateral agencies could respond to such events quickly and effectively. However, another representative remarked that the catastrophe had revealed the need for better co-ordination throughout the United Nations system and, to that end, recommended that UNEP expand its emergency response programme to a network of regional centres based on the regional seas pattern and staffed by middle management UNEP personnel.

52. The observer for the International Maritime Organization (IMO) informed the Council that action by his organization and its member States had been undertaken in the context of the International Convention on Oil Pollution, Preparedness, Response and Co-operation of 1990, adding that, at the request of several Governments, the Secretary-General of IMO had established on 15 March 1991 an international oil pollution disaster fund to facilitate the rapid deployment of equipment and services, to catalyse efforts to combat the oil pollution disaster, to mitigate its environmental impact and to provide a framework to enable Governments to support the international effort under the auspices of IMO.

53. One representative commended UNEP's formulation of the United Nations Inter-Agency Action Plan for the region and stressed the importance of co-operation and co-ordination between UNEP and related bodies such as the World Health Organization, the World Meteorological Organization and IMO. She also urged the international community to express its firm determination that destruction of the environment should never be used as a means of armed conflict. That view was echoed by another representative, who suggested the development of a legal instrument prohibiting what she termed "environmental terrorism". She also stated that UNEP, together with other United Nations bodies, should work as soon as possible to reduce the time-lag between the assessment of an environmental catastrophe and response to its impacts. Another representative stressed the importance of developing such concepts as "ecological warfare" and "ecological crime". Yet another condemned chemical warfare under any circumstances.

54. One representative stated that the deteriorating environmental situation in the Gulf region, notably in terms of marine damage, called for even greater efforts by UNEP, perhaps through the Ocean and Coastal Areas Programme Activity Centre, in collaboration with all agencies concerned with marine pollution. Some representatives warned that the environmental disaster in the Gulf posed a potential danger to the entire planet. One representative complained that the Executive Director's report on the catastrophe made no mention of the environmental damage to his own country, which included severe soil damage and oil spills caused by bombing. Nor, he added, had the report mentioned his country's efforts to clean up the oil spill. Another stated that the burning oil wells threatened his country and requested that UNEP measure its climatic and other impacts and advise the affected countries on appropriate measures to counteract such damage. The observer for the Commission of the European Communities informed the Council that his organization was currently exploring ways to reduce the negative health effects caused by the burning oil wells in Kuwait.

Effects of chemical weapons on human health and the environment

55. Introducing his report on the effects of chemical weapons on human health and the environment (UNEP/GC.16/6), the Executive Director explained that the document constituted a response to decision 15/9 of the Governing Council. He expressed the hope that the Council would find no contentious elements in the suggested action contained in the report and that, in dealing with this subject, the Council would retain its customary harmony.

56. No representatives asked for the floor.

Statements by observers

57. Three observers for national liberation movements, namely, Palestine, the African National Congress and the Pan African Congress of Azania, informed the Governing Council of environmental problems in their countries.

58. The observers for a number of specialized agencies and United Nations organs, namely, ILO, FAO, Unesco, Unesco/IOC, WHO, WMO, IMO, IAEA, UNDP, UNFPA and UNCTAD, addressed the Governing Council, giving details of their environmental activities and their fruitful co-operation with UNEP.

59. The observer for the Commission of the European Community made a statement to supplement that of the representative acting as EC spokesman and the observer for the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment gave an account of his organization's activities and close co-operation with UNEP.

60. The observers for the following non-governmental organizations: Greenpeace International, International Council of Environmental Law, International Union for the Conservation of Nature, the World Muslim Congress and the Environment Liaison Centre International informed the Governing Council of their activities. The observers for the Business Council for Sustainable Development and the International Chamber of Commerce gave the Governing Council details of their endeavours to involve the world business community in sustainable development.

Response by the Executive Director to points raised in the discussion

61. Responding to the discussion, the Executive Director said that, despite the many interventions on environment and economics, the Governing Council had not yet given him sufficient guidance on that issue and he appealed to its members to do so. He also reminded the Council that the term "sustainable development" had been coined during its own deliberations at its 1982 Session of a Special Character.

62. Replying to the request for the results of the eco-development projects of the 1970s, he urged that the reports of the regional seminars on those projects be reviewed, stating that some of the recommendations emanating from those seminars had indeed been incorporated into the strategy for the Third United Nations Development Decade.

63. He wished to point out that he had been instructed by the Governing Council to submit proposals concerning the strengthening of UNEP, and had not done so on his own initiative. While he could understand that some representatives might wish to postpone decisions of a structural nature until after the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, he failed to comprehend why decisions which were not structural should also be deferred. After all, the forthcoming conference would deal with development as well as environment, but there had been no suggestion that the activities of UNDP, or the development work of other United Nations bodies should be frozen. It was, nevertheless, gratifying that all member States seemed to agree that UNEP needed strengthening.

64. He noted that the vast majority of the representatives who had spoken were in favour of establishing a centre for urgent environmental assistance on an experimental basis and that a large number of speakers had supported the proposal to establish a World Environment Academy, while others had indicated doubts rather than opposition.

65. Most representatives had spoken in favour of the establishment of a Green Brigade. Some others might, perhaps, have misconstrued the actual significance of the proposal.

66. With respect to environmental conflicts, the Executive Director said that his proposals had not, perhaps, been entirely clear. The intention was that UNEP should engage in the prevention of conflict and not conflict resolution, well before the problem reached the International Court of Justice or the Security Council. The Regional Seas agreements constituted a model in that regard.

67. As for the verification of compliance with treaty obligations, that was of course a matter for the Contracting Parties to the treaty in question. The Governing Council itself could not enter into the verification process; it could only recommend to Contracting Parties how and in what ways they could verify their compliance with the instruments they had ratified. In addition, the Council might invite the heads of the secretariats of the major Conventions to meet to pool their information, as reported by the Contracting Parties, and supply such information and their comments on the subject to the Parties.

68. Responding to a variety of points on the Fund target issue, the Executive Director expressed his gratitude to all those countries that had increased their contributions to the Fund. Agreeing with those who had drawn attention to the imbalance in contributions, he stated that he himself had raised that issue in 1982 when first asked for comparisons with the United Nations assessment scale. He observed that the imbalance lay among the developed countries which had furnished 92.6 per cent of Fund resources.

69. He indicated, too, that he was not particularly surprised by the general reluctance to endorse to the $250 million target, which had been manifest the previous year, but warned that the approved programme for 1992 could not be carried out unless the $100 million target for that year was reached.

70. The proposal that a special session of the Governing Council be held before UNCED was based on a legal necessity. The General Assembly had asked the Secretary-General for a consolidated report on further substantive follow-up to General Assembly resolutions 42/186 and 42/187, to go to the Assembly and to UNCED through the Governing Council and the Economic and Social Council. If the Governing Council wished to be relieved of the task of considering the report, it would have to address itself to the General Assembly but, in any event, it was required to decide how to deal with the matter. Explaining why the reports had not been presented to the Council at its current session as proposed by one representative, he pointed out that they would not be ready until December 1991 at the earliest.

71. The Executive Director urged the Council to reach a decision concerning the report on desertification which the General Assembly had asked it to prepare.

72. As the members of the Council were aware, UNEP had been having some communication troubles at Gigiri. He had himself discussed the matter with the Kenyan authorities and was most gratified at the assurances given by the representative of the host country during the discussion.

<u>The environmental situation in the occupied Palestinian and other Arab territories</u>

73. The Executive Director said that the report on the environmental situation in the occupied Palestinian and other Arab territories (UNEP/GC.16/5) had been prepared at the request of the Governing Council (decision 15/8), which had declared that the previous report

(UNEP/GC.15/5/Add.2) was inadequate and needed to be updated. The new report was to be a comprehensive one based on the findings of a group of consultants.

74. Requests for information had been sent to the Governments concerned and to the United Nations specialized agencies. Information had been supplied by the Governments of Egypt, Jordan and Syria and by the delegation of Palestine. Some specialized agencies had supplied material, while others had stated that their documentation was too voluminous to supply and had invited the consultants to examine it and select what they required.

75. As was made clear in the report (paras. 11 and 12), much of the information from the various sources was conflicting, and the group of consultants had endeavoured to give an objective view. Paragraph 86 of the report contained some recommendations.

76. One representative said that his delegation had strong views on the report, which was a tendentious document. He objected to its entire approach, which brought in many irrelevant issues having little or nothing to do with the environmental situation in the occupied territories. His delegation supported UNEP efforts to assess the environmental situation in the occupied territories, or anywhere else in the world, but the current report showed that the concern it had expressed at Governing Council decision 15/8 was well-founded.

77. Several representatives deplored the occupation of the Palestinian and other Arab territories, which had resulted in a deterioration in their environment. Examples they mentioned were deforestation, the diversion of rivers, excessive extraction of groundwater and the use of suffocating, toxic and polluting gases which were harmful to health and to the ecosystem. One of those representatives said that the immigration of Jews from the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics and Ethiopia would impose a further strain on the limited resources of the occupied territories and result in further environmental deterioration.

78. The observer for Palestine said that, despite the difficulties involved in collecting the information, the group of consultants had produced a worthy report. He noted that no consultant had been able to visit the occupied territories (para. 6) and wondered why. The use of toxic gases in the occupied territories had caused illnesses, miscarriages and deaths of children.

79. Water was a scarce resource in the territories and required careful environmental management. Settlements were still being built, leading to a strain on natural resources and consequent desertification. On the West Bank, 80 per cent of the water available was used by the occupying forces, which were also exploiting the water resources of the Gaza Strip, Golan Heights and southern Lebanon.

80. The Executive Director said that he had always attempted to avoid bringing politics into environmental matters, and would continue to do so. In the case of the report under consideration, he had simply obeyed the instructions given him by the Governing Council in its decision 15/8.

CHAPTER ...

STATE-OF-THE-ENVIRONMENT REPORTS

81. At its 7th meeting on 29 May 1991, the Governing Council took up its discussion of agenda item 5: "State-of-the-environment reports".

82. In the deliberations on the item, the Council had before it the following documentation: progress report on comprehensive 1992 state-of-the-environment report (UNEP/GC.16/7); state-of-the-environment report 1990 ("Children and the environment") (UNEP/GC.16/8); state-of-the-environment report 1991 ("State-of-the-world environment" report)(UNEP/GC.16/9); emerging environmental issues (UNEP/GC.16/9/Add.1); hazardous environmental events (UNEP/GC.16/9/Add.2); and state-of-the-environment reports: suggested action by the Governing Council (UNEP/GC.16/L.4).

83. Introducing the item, the Executive Director said that one of the main problems in preparing reports on the state of the environment was the very limited monitoring data received from developing countries. Most of the data provided to the Secretariat were from developed countries, which gave rise to an unavoidable slant in the presentation. Time-series data in particular, going back up to ten years, were unavailable from developing countries, which lacked the capacities for such monitoring. He hoped that the members of the Council would call on Governments to build and strengthen such capacities in those countries. Referring to the comprehensive report covering the period from 1982-1992, he said that the goal of completing such a large-scale publication by 1992, instead of 1993 as originally projected, presented major logistical time-frame problems. However, in co-operation with the editors and authors, he would do his utmost to meet the earlier deadline.

84. A number of representatives expressed the hope that the comprehensive report would be an authoritative statement on the condition of the planet. Presentation of a first-class and well-balanced report to Rio, said one representative, would be the best possible evidence of UNEP's unique expertise.

85. One representative, expressing the hope that the comprehensive report could be ready for presentation to UNCED, said that in the report the role of environmental information should be stressed, together with the interlinked subjects of resource - and environmental accounting, as well as environmental indicators. He considered that the section on the Arctic in the Executive Director's report on emerging environmental issues was too brief, since that was an area which needed a lot of attention.

86. Another representative, expressing support for UNEP's work on environmental data reporting, stressed the need for further registration of environmental data, especially over time. Such data were vital in ensuring compliance with agreements made on the environment and in assessing the need for new ones.

87. One representative, expressing agreement with the way in which the issue of municipal waste had been presented in the Executive Director's report on emerging environmental issues, stressed the need to give high priority to that subject, together with the issue of drinking water quality.

88. The 1990 state-of-the-environment report, dealing with the effects of the environment on children, was singled out by one representative, who hoped that UNEP would continue to focus on the protection of children.

CHAPTER ...

CO-ORDINATION QUESTIONS

89. At its 7th meeting on 29 May 1991, the Governing Council took up its discussion of agenda item 6: "Co-ordination questions".

90. In the deliberations on the item, the Council had before it the following documentation: the 1989 Annual Report of the Executive Director, chapter II (UNEP/GC.16/2); the 1990 Annual Report of the Executive Director, chapter II (UNEP/GC.16/3); Strengthening of inter-agency

co-ordination mechanisms related to the environment (UNEP/GC.16/10); Joint progress report of the Executive Directors of the United Nations Environment Programme and the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat) (UNEP/GC.16/11); 1989 Report of the Administrative Committee on Co-ordination to the Governing Council at its sixteenth session (Part I) (UNEP/GC.16/13); 1990 Report of the Administrative Committee on Co-ordination to the Governing Council at its sixteenth session (Part I) (UNEP/GC.16/12); Secretary-General's progress report on the follow-up and implementation of General Assembly resolutions 42/186 and 42/187 (UNEP/GC.16/14); and Memorandum of understanding concerning co-operation between UNEP and other agencies of the United Nations system (UNEP/GC.16/Inf.3).

91. At its 1st plenary meeting, the Governing Council decided to refer to the Programme Committee item 6 (a) and those parts of item 6 (b) dealing with the implementation of the Plan of Action to Combat Desertification. The discussion on these parts of the item are to be found in the Programme Committee's report.

92. Agenda item 6, co-ordination questions, was introduced by the Executive Director, who stated that UNEP served as the secretariat for many important inter-agency co-ordination mechanisms, namely, the Designated Officials on Environmental Matters (DOEM), the Committee on International Development Institutions for the Environment (CIDIE), the Ecosystems Conservation Group (ECG), and the Inter-agency Working Group on Desertification (IAWGD). He stated that, in response to signals from partner-agencies that better secretariat services were required, he had assigned two of his special assistants to those functions. In addition, he was requesting two junior professional staff members to assist in that work.

93. Turning to the report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of General Assembly resolution 44/227, covering earlier Assembly resolutions on the Environmental perspective to the Year 2000 and Beyond and the report of the World Commission on Environment and Development (UNEP/GC.16/14), the Executive Director stated that the report in question had been submitted to the Governing Council for transmission to the General Assembly through the Economic and Social Council.

94. One representative questioned the adequacy of existing co-ordination machinery, notably ACC and DOEM, stressing the fact that the latter, which had been established to replace the Environment Co-ordination Board, lacked a clear legal basis. Further, he stated that an institutional structure commensurate with current environmental challenges should be established. A number of others supported the proposal to revive the Environment Co-ordination Board with an expansion of its initial mandate so that it might serve as an Environment and Development Co-ordination Board. Another stated that that proposal merited further consideration. Still another suggested that a new environmental co-ordinating body, composed of senior officials of every United Nations body concerned with environmental action, be established under a United Nations Under-Secretary-General.

95. As for the Executive Director's proposal that a new unit be established within UNEP for co-ordination, a number of representatives remarked that, since co-ordination was a major part of UNEP's mandate, the entire UNEP secretariat, rather than a single unit, should deal with that function.